222 137 261 Séba is a kind of long, poisonous, black turnip which is eaten only in times of famine and after protracted cooking.

Seba and vidiba caused the death of many people during the last Mossi famine by giving them dysentery.

137 231 /511/ As for wild fodder found in Mossi territory, there is first of all kénibédo, that grows in bunches 30 centimeters high in damp hollows. Its leaves are rudimentary. It is severed 20 centimeters from the ground and stored during the dry season.

Then there are the fodder plants belonging to the papilionaceous family, densa and youbenga. The tiny stem of densa or youbenga is not severed from the plant itself, which reaches a height of 0.30 or 0.40 meter in both cases. Horses eat them either green or dry, indiscriminately.

137 314 283 Finally, let us say a word about souga, a sort of wild hemp called thus by the Mossi. The Nounouma call it boupo, and the Kassouna bénédévio. It is found only in certain parts of Mossi territory, but it grows throughout Gourounsi lands. Its bark yields very tough white fibers which the natives use in the manufacture of rope, string or thread for fishing implements. The bark does not keep through the dry season, so it is reduced to fibers during the rainy season. The fibers, on the other hand, can take the most intensive dryness without deteriorating. Souga is not cultivated.

222 433 We are now finished with Mossi gathering activities. They have a certain importance, as we have just seen, the same one on the whole as in other Sudanese populations. They are infinitely less important than cultivation, of course, but only slightly less so than stockbreeding, and they must be placed on the same level as the hunt. They are far more important than fishing or arboriculture.

245 433 The latter deserves no real mention. It hardly exists among the Mossi. It is limited to what we described earlier about the rônier and to the planting, here and there, of a few papaw trees.

433 In short, cultivation comes first, with stockbreeding trailing far behind, then gathering and hunting on the same level, then fishing and finally arboriculture.

010 /512/ Industries flourish among the Mossi. We shall review one by one, in detail, the various trades they exercise.

323 wide, 2 meters in diameter, and open at the top), then some straw on which the pots are laid, and then more straw and firewood. They set this afire and keep it burning for twelve hours.

In order to polish their pots, the women take the bark of the [314] nobora or n'kouna. They soak it in huge canari for a whole day. The water acquires a reddish hue. The fired and cooled pots are immersed in these canari for a while, and then allowed to dry in the open air. When this is over, the pots may be taken to market and sold.

The blacksmiths' wives make their pottery during the dry season. During the winter season, they work in their husbands' fields.

326 241 During the winter season, Mossi blacksmiths work both at cultivation and at their trade, but mostly at cultivation. During the dry season, on the other hand, they work only at the blacksmith's trade.

As far as cultivation is concerned, they mostly grow small millet, followed by large white millet and large red millet, maize, peanuts, underground peas, sesame, and beans. They cultivate cotton and tobacco, but no indigo. Their wives sow gombo, etc.

326 231 /516/ They own livestock which their children herd. As a rule, they have a little more livestock than other Mossi, except for goats and donkeys. This, incidentally, should not surprise us, for the Negro blacksmiths of West Africa often display an ability for stockbreeding and especially for horse trading. Among the Mossi, however, this is not very pronounced.

326 The blacksmiths neither hunt nor fish, but they do engage in gathering activities like other Mossi. They exercise no industries other than those of iron and pottery. They do not work copper, silver, or gold. They do not work as weavers, either. They entrust their wives with the task of gathering and spinning whatever cotton they grow, and then they hand it over to the weavers.

326 438 They do undertake a little trading, slightly more in fact than the average Mossi. When a blacksmith has smelted a large quantity of iron, he sometimes purchases some livestock, leads it to Ouanké, buys kola nuts which he takes to Saraféré, and brings back salt from that locality. This is not done very frequently, however.

322 [B35] salt, etc. Small bows are worth 20 cowries, medium ones 70, and large ones 100.

285 We have just reviewed woodworking. Let us proceed to basketry. Here the latter gives rise to two major trades, the basket maker's and the hat maker's. Let us study them in turn.

As an example, here is Niandé Zango, a basket maker and head of a soukala. He has two wives and three children. His soukala numbers five huts.

He works in the fields during the winter season, and at his trade during the dry season. His fields bring him the larger returns.

He makes his baskets at home without waiting for an order, and he has his wives sell them at market.

He gets doudouma straw in the bush and cultivates mono in his maize field.

[314] Doudouma is a tall grass that is left to dry and that furnishes excellent straw for the manufacture of baskets and trays.

Doudoumidou is doudouma straw dyed red with mono.

249 386 285 Mono (faraoro in Bambara) is a plant grown by the Mossi in their maize fields, around the soukala. It looks a great deal like large red millet, but it is /525/ not the same thing. It is probably a variety of large millet, however. Mono is sown along with maize when the first rains begin to fall. Holes are made with the koutiaga, mono grains placed within and covered up. When mono has emerged from the ground, the weeds are pulled out. The harvesting is done about two and a half months after sowing. The stalks are severed at the base and left to dry in the sun, and then the sheaths and culms are torn off. The latter are the parts used to dye the straw red.

The sheaths and culms are crushed by rubbing them by hand in a canari full of water. Then the doudouma straw is left to soak in this canari. The canari is placed on the fire, where it is kept for six hours. When this is over, the straw, now dyed red, is removed.

386 285 Doudousabalé is doudouma straw dyed black by immersion in bérédo. The straw is gathered, taken to a watercourse, and buried in bérédo. It is left there for a whole day, and this gives it a shiny grey hue.

285
314 Gansacé is a gramineous plant that grows wild along the banks of watercourses. The natives do not cultivate it. Dried gansacé provides a kind of straw that is used in the manufacture of straw trays. The Foulbé settled in the area also use it in the manufacture of hats.

Boulouvaka is a shrub that grows along watercourses. The boulouvaka stem is sectioned in two or four, yielding small flexible twigs that are dyed black by immersion in bérédo. Once dyed, these twigs are used in the manufacture of Mossi baskets.

Koué is a tall gramineous plant that provides straw used in the manufacture of certain baskets. Koué grows wild all over the bush, in dry spots as well as watered areas.

Dana is a shrub the wood of which is used in the manufacture of the Mossi baskets made of koué straw. It grows everywhere in the bush.

Sepso, semso, semsoro or semsogo is the Mossi name for the bark filaments taken from the néré pods. /526/ They are used in making straw trays. Sepso may be dyed red with mono, or black with bérédo.

All these elements are used by basket makers in the manufacture of their baskets and straw trays.

285
435 Now, here are some samples of Mossi basketry:

1. Large yellow baskets made of koué straw. The rims are made of dana stalks. These baskets are sold at local markets for 250 cowries apiece. They are crude baskets used to carry millet or to bring it to horses. They are quadrangular and shaped like upside-down pyramids sectioned at the base.

2. Large deluxe baskets shaped like the above but distinct in that instead of being solid yellow, straw-yellow, they are multi-colored. They are made of koué straw (yellow), doudoumidou straw (red), and boulouvaka straw (black). They are worth about 1,500 cowries apiece.

3. Straw trays, straw dishes of a sort, made with doudouma (yellow) and doudoumidou (red). They sell for 250 cowries when small, 300 when large.

4. Ordinary straw dishes made with doudouma only (undyed straw). They are worth 150 cowries.